

16, 18, 20, & 22 SOUTH SIXTH STREET
Fort Dodge
Webster County
Iowa

HABS NO. IA-189

HABS
IOWA
94-FTDO,
4-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORIC AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF DRAWINGS

Historic American Building Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, D.C. 20013-7197

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

16-22 S. SIXTH ST. (COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS)

HABS No. IA-189

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IOWA
94-FTDO,
4-

Location: 16-22 S. Sixth St., Fort Dodge, Webster County, Iowa.
Lots 1-4, Block 15, Original Town of Fort Dodge.

Present Owners: No. 16: Mickey E. and Judy K. Geopfert
No. 18: Steven J. Daniel
No. 20: Paul and Roberta Ross
No. 22: Steven J. Daniel

Present Occupants: No. 16: Shirl and Dave's Tap
No. 18: Steven J. Daniel
No. 20: Vacant
No. 22: Steven J. Daniel

Significance: Nos. 16-22 S. Sixth St. compose a rare (for Fort Dodge) surviving business block retaining a set of first-floor Queen Anne Revival-style cast-iron storefronts. No. 16, which predates the other three segments, retains its original Italianate detailing on its north (side) and west (rear) elevations with early Romanesque Revival round-arched windows having cast-iron hoods and sills. The upper floors of Nos. 20 and 22 retain their original floor plans and interiors.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Dates of erection: No. 16: 1880
Nos. 18, 20, and 22: 1889
2. Architect: Not known.
3. Original and subsequent owners:

No. 16: Mickey E. and Judy A. Geopfert, 7/20/1988
Norvilla M. Messenbrink, 6/23/78
Joseph & Pearl I. Augustine, 1/24/47
W. L. Engelbart & wife, 8/9/38
Fred Engelbart, 8/12/35
Louisa Becker and Rudolf C. Becker, 1/10/02
William Lynch and J. E. Waldberger, 2/14/1899
Nellie Keller & husband, 2/25/94
Jacob Keller, 12/26/92
John Parsons & wife, 6/30/88
Ellen M. Holloway, 10/1/69

- No. 18: Steven James Daniel, 10/18/1986
Alexander & Regina K. Daniel, 11/3/81
Ferris Daniel, 10/3/34
L. Quiley, 6/3/1889
John Parsons & wife, 6/30/88
- No. 20: Paul & Roberta Ross, 5/27/83
Mavis & Leonard Messenbrink, 9/23/75
Alexander N. & Regina K. Daniel
Ferris Daniel, 9/24/36
Henry & Eva Koll, 11/27/1894
W. S. Childs & wife, 6/3/89
John Parsons & wife, 9/18/85
- No. 22: Steven James Daniel, 10/18/1986
Alexander & Regina Daniel, 11/3/81
Ferris Daniel & Sallerna Daniel, 2/13/18
J. R. Mulroney & Frank Mulroney, 6/3/1889
John Parsons & wife, 9/18/85

Uses:

- No. 16: Furniture Store, 1892
Saloon and Billiard Parlor, 1896-1900
Rudolph C. Becher, Harness Shop, 1907-1928
- No. 18: Bakery, 1892
Restaurant and Bakery, 1900-1907
Dry Goods, 1912
John Rizos, Imperial Lunch, 1928
- No. 20: Vacant, 1892
Saloon, 1896
Vacant, 1900
Billiard Parlor, 1907
Pool Hall and Barber Shop, 1912
Joseph Koll, Cigars, 1928
- No. 22: Harness Shop, 1892-1896
Wholesale Dry Goods, 1900-1912
Ferris D. Daniel, Clothing, 1928

4. Original plans and construction: Little is known of the original appearance of No. 16, which predates the other three members of the block by nine years. The building was constructed as a rectangular two-story block measuring approximately 23' x 75', having a flat roof behind brick masonry parapet walls. Fabric surviving from the original construction includes the two-story brick masonry north and west elevations which retain a set of unusual round-arched window openings having cast-iron hoods and

lintels. Those of the first floor are foreshortened in an apparent effort to provide daylight to the interior while not obstructing interior casework. The interior of the first and second floor retains virtually nothing of the original construction except the basic structure and, perhaps, plastering on original exterior walls.

More original fabric survives in Nos. 18, 20, and 22. With No. 16, these form two pairs of the block divided by a brick firewall at the center. Each pair has a central stair hall leading to the second floor. On the first-floor east front, elaborate cast-iron storefronts survive from the original construction. Each unit is identical to the other with tan brick used as opposed to the red brick of No. 16. The second-floor east front is of brick construction with tall double-hung wooden sash in the rectangular masonry openings having flat cut stone sills and lintels. The rear elevations are entirely brick construction with simpler rectangular, tall window openings containing wooden double-hung sash. The stair halls have doorways on the first-floor level of the east front and the second-floor level of the west rear. Doorways were likewise centered between window openings in each unit's west elevation. Original Queen Anne Revival-style woodwork survives on the first floors of Nos. 18 and 22.

5. Alterations and additions: In 1889 No. 16 was remodeled to fit with Nos. 18, 20, and 22. Work centered on reconstruction of the east front to match those of its neighbors. Surviving architectural fabric on the second floor indicates that the second floor was renovated into the present four apartments in the 1920s. There is no indication of the original plan for this floor. The first floor retains bar fittings dating from the 1950s and 1960s, at which time the original first-floor cast-iron storefront was replaced with the present projecting plywood construction.

No. 18 lost its second floor and roof to fire in the 1980s and they were not reconstructed. Aside from on-going deterioration resulting from the fire, the building is essentially unaltered.

No. 20 had its original cast-iron first-floor east front cased in plywood during a remodelling effort in the 1960s. The interior of the first floor was inaccessible, but it is assumed that it, like No. 16, was remodelled at the same time. Aside from significant deterioration, the second floor has never been altered from the time it was finished as an apartment. Given the fact that none of the second floors are similar to the others, it is assumed that the owners immediately following the Parsons were responsible for finishing the space. As such, the surviving interior probably represents an early alteration of what was probably originally unfinished space.

No. 22 has had relatively insignificant alterations made to the interior of the first floor over the years. Like No. 20 it retains a second floor which was probably finished shortly after original construction and, as such, survives intact, but in very deteriorated condition.

B. Historical Context:

The Sanborn fire insurance map for October 1885, the earliest version for Fort Dodge, shows a different building at the site of No. 16 than the present one. In 1885 the building had one story and a smaller footprint. As in 1993, it was a saloon. Other commercial buildings along either side of the alley opening onto what was then Fifth Street included a confectionery and a general store south of the alley, and two saloon/billiard halls and Barry's Hall north of the alley. The latter faced Market Street (now Central) and contained a dry goods store and a vacant storefront. There were two other vacant buildings south of the No. 16 location in 1885.

Sanborn maps bracket construction dates for 16-22 S. Sixth St. as after October 1885 and before May 1892, and the record of property owners and other sources also suggest the buildings were constructed in the late 1880s. Webster County Assessor's Office records state that No. 16 was built in 1880 and the other three storefronts all in 1889. John Parsons and his wife Anne E. purchased the property containing Nos. 16-22 in the late 1880s. The Parsons bought lots 1 (No. 16) and 2 (No. 18) on June 30, 1888, and lots 3 (No. 20) and 4 (No. 22) on September 18, 1885.

John Parsons was born in England in 1824 and emigrated to America in 1848. After spending time in Galena, Illinois, and Dyersville, Iowa, Parsons came to Fort Dodge with his wife during its pioneer settlement period, in 1857. He opened the first blacksmith shop and related foundry after the military occupation of the fort. Later, Parsons was instrumental in developing the brick industry in the community, for he established one of the first brick kilns in the area, making it a likely, although undocumented, source for the brick of these buildings.

Based on Sanborn map information, No. 16 has functioned as a commercial building since at least 1892, when it was a furniture store. At the turn of the century (1896 and 1900) it offered more convivial uses, as a saloon and billiard parlor. Between 1907 and at least 1928, it was a harness shop, and it is this historic use with which No. 16 is primarily identified.

As noted, the present set of buildings was in place by May 1892, according to the Sanborn map of that date. By then, the immediate blocks emanating from the public square and running east along Market Street (now Central) constituted a well-developed commercial area. Walnut Street (now First Avenue) at the south end of the block

containing present 16 S. Sixth St. marked the boundary of residential development (with scattered commercial use) south of the public square.

The 1892 Sanborn map shows a furniture store located at No. 16, a bakery with an oven in the basement at No. 18, a vacant building at No. 20, and a harness store with its shop in the rear one-third of the building at No. 22. Completing the commercial use south of the alley was a general store, at present No. 24, and a printing business on the corner of then S. Fifth and Walnut streets (now S. Sixth and First Avenue).

According to the January 1896 Sanborn map, the buildings contained a saloon (No. 16), the bakery present in 1892 (No. 18), another saloon (No. 20), and, again, the harness shop (No. 22). The present street name and numbering system was also in place by 1896. An 1896 booster publication described C. Schaffer's harness shop at No. 22. The business was located "in the north half of the Mulroney Block, which was built to be used for this purpose." Noting the complete stock on hand, the account mentioned "the large assortment of harness, saddles, blankets, robes, whips, and everything for which there is any demand." An interior view of the store revealed the extensive assortment.

"Mulroney Brothers Business Block and General Store" was also illustrated in the 1896 booster publication but with no text. J. R. and Frank Mulroney purchased lot 4 (No. 22) from John Parsons in June 1889, perhaps to expand their control of the area. The ca. 1896 photograph shows the present 22 S. Sixth St. storefront. The broad molded metal cornice, which was subsequently removed, is visible. It is interesting to note that Mulroney's commercial building at No. 24 did not match the Nos. 16-22 storefronts, yet the two dissimilar buildings apparently were considered to be the Mulroney Block, at least for the purpose of the booster publication.

In 1900, No. 16 was a billiard parlor, No. 18 was a restaurant and bakery, No. 20 was vacant, and No. 22 was a wholesale dry goods store. The latter extended its operations south to include 24 S. Sixth St. as well. The dominance of Central Avenue and the public square as Fort Dodge's principal commercial district remained, and a larger representation of commercial uses was found also south of and along First Avenue in addition to dwellings.

Seven years later (January 1907), commercial usage had changed slightly to a harness shop in No. 16, the bakery and restaurant in No. 18, a billiard parlor in No. 20, and the dry goods store in No. 22. The latter did not extend to No. 24, which contained a flour and feed operation in 1907. The block of South Sixth Street between Central and First avenues contained small commercial operations, including saloons, grocery stores, drug stores, and a barber shop.

Commercial uses persisted, and in 1912 the harness shop first noted in 1907 remained in place at No. 16. The bakery and restaurant at No. 18

had been replaced by a dry goods store. The storefront at No. 20 was a combined pool hall and barber shop, and No. 22 still housed a dry goods store.

The 1925 Sanborn map did not specify the types of commercial operations in place, but merely stated that the buildings were stores. It also noted that rooms were let on the second floor of 20 S. Sixth St. The 1928 city directory for Fort Dodge picks up where detailed information from Sanborn maps ends. According to the street index for 1928, the first available issue at the Fort Dodge Public Library, the following were found at 16-22 S. Sixth St.:

16	Rudolph C. Becher, harness manufacturer
18	Imperial Lunch, John Rizos, owner
18-1/2	John Rizos
20	Joseph E. Koll, cigars
20-1/2	Vacant
22	Ferris D. Daniel, clothing
22-1/2	Ferris D. Daniel (wife Salema)
	Eliz., student
	Mary, student
	John F., clerk, Fort Dodge Tire Company

The Daniel operation was listed in the 1928 city directory business section under "clothing dealers--men's and boys'--retail." The Daniel name has been associated with the ownership of three of the four storefronts, Nos. 18, 20, and 22. In 1918 Ferris and Sallerna Daniel purchased No. 22 from the Mulroneys. The Daniels had emigrated from Lebanon via Sioux City to Fort Dodge and were part of a small but vigorous Christian and Muslim Lebanese community in Fort Dodge. Using a horse and wagon, Ferris Daniel peddled dry goods in the countryside around Fort Dodge. It is possible that the No. 22 address acted as a wholesale dry goods operation for the business in the early 1900s. It was listed as a dry goods store as early as 1900 on the Sanborn maps, and Daniel's grandson, Steven Daniel, stated that his father was born ca. 1916 in the apartment over No. 22. The date of arrival of the Ferris Daniel household to Fort Dodge is unknown.

In the 1930s Ferris Daniel expanded his holdings, purchasing No. 18 in 1934 and No. 20 in 1936, and opening a tire business with his brother, John. The Daniels were not the first or only Lebanese involved in the tire business in Fort Dodge. According to the 1928 city directory, John Coury (a Lebanese name) owned the Fort Dodge Tire Company, where John F. Daniel clerked. Also, Moses Habhab had a tire business at 14 N. Sixth St. in 1928. The Daniel brothers ran their operation from the storefront at 22 S. Sixth St., changing tires on the street in front of the building. Grandson Steven Daniel carries on the family business at a location, 520 First Ave. South, just around the corner from the original one.

In 1928 Abbass Habhab, also Lebanese, had a wholesale dry goods operation on the corner (No. 26). However, Steven Daniel and other Lebanese-Americans in Fort Dodge state that the area was not known as a Lebanese district, and residents seem in general to have worked assiduously to assimilate into mainstream American culture. According to his grandson, Ferris Daniel was looked upon as a leader in the Lebanese community. He assisted new immigrants by managing their business affairs and generally helped ease the transition into a new and strange country.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: 16-22 S. Sixth St. retains a relatively consistent set of front (east) elevations composed of first-floor cast-iron Queen Anne Revival-style storefronts with brick second floors. The north elevation of No. 16 retains round-arched window and door openings from its original Italianate style. The west (alley) elevations of the set are relatively plain.
2. Condition of fabric: Originally virtually identical, they have been modified as all have lost their metal cornices, No. 16 has lost its first-floor storefront, and No. 20 has had its first-floor storefront clad in plywood. No. 16 retains its original facades on its north and west elevations with the only major exception being the replacement of windows with modern aluminum sash. The first-floor interiors of Nos. 18 and 22 remain relatively unaltered, as are the second-floor interiors of Nos. 20 and 22. Fire destroyed the second-floor interior of No. 18, and both the first and second floors of No. 16 and the first floor of No. 20 have been remodelled in recent years. Deterioration is particularly severe on the second floors of Nos. 20 and 22 and all of No. 18. The rear wall of No. 20 is in a state of impending collapse.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: This set of four nearly identical two-story commercial buildings measures approximately 92'-0" x 75'-0" overall.
2. Foundations: The foundations are rubble limestone masonry.
3. Walls: With the exception of the first-story east (front) walls, all walls are brick laid in common bond. Those of No. 16 are of reddish-orange brick and those of the other three buildings are of tan brick. The west elevation of No. 16 has been parged with a thin coating of Portland cement. The first-floor storefronts of

Nos. 18 and 22 are original cast-iron construction with pairs of banded and decorated round cast-iron columns flanking an inset opening. On each side of the columns are glazed walls with rectangular cast-iron pilasters similar in style to the columns at each end. This composition is capped with a deep, molded cast-iron cornice with flanking cast-iron brackets. The first-floor storefront of No. 20 appears to retain all of the above-described construction behind a recent plywood front. A broad plywood frieze beneath the cornice forms the background for the sign, ROBERTA'S, in large Old English lettering. A similar plywood frieze is found on the facade of No. 16 sporting SHIRL AND DAVES TAP in Sans Serif lettering. Its plywood facade gives no indication of the survival of cast-iron elements within, with the possible exception of the two columns.

4. Structural system, framing: The structural system consists of brick bearing walls. Between the outer pairs of buildings are narrow hallways formed by structural frame walls. Spanning north-south between the walls are wooden floor and roof joists.
5. Porches, balconies: At the second-floor level between Nos. 16 and 18 the hallway ends in a doorway on the west, which leads onto a modern wood balcony with straight-run stair running north down to the alley. The corresponding doorway between Nos. 20 and 22 lacks a balcony as it opens directly onto the roof of 520 First Ave. South.

At the first-floor storefront of No. 22 the hardware survives from an early canvas awning system. The canvas portions are entirely missing.

6. Chimneys: No. 16 retains three plain brick chimneys along its north elevation. Following the fire in No. 18, whatever chimneys it may have had are now missing. No. 20 retains a plain brick chimney on its north elevation. Likewise, No. 22 retains a similar chimney on its south elevation.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Primary access is through first-floor doorways in the east fronts. No. 16 has a modern steel slab door at the north end of its first floor. Nos. 18 and 22 retain their original pairs of glazed doors centered in the elevation. No. 20 retains the original door location, but contains a modern wood slab door, instead.

Primary access to the second floors is through single doorways set between Nos. 16 and 18 and between Nos. 20 and 22. These contain modern glazed aluminum doors.

Secondary access to the first floor is typically through a west (rear) doorway. No. 16 retains its doorway, but it has been infilled with frame construction to permit the interior remodelling into restrooms. Secondary access, instead, is through a doorway at the west end of the north wall, containing a modern steel slab door within a tall, segmental-arched opening. Although unused, the doorways of Nos. 18 and 20 survive. No. 22 is missing its door, with the doorway now opening directly into the adjacent tire store.

Secondary access to the second floor is through second-floor doorways on the west corresponding to those of the east. They also contain modern slab doors.

- b. Windows: All of the windows on the east and west, with the exception of the west elevation of No. 16, are tall rectangular openings originally with one-over-one-light double-hung wooden sash. The sash have been removed and boarded over with plywood, with the exception of No. 16.

The cast-iron storefronts of Nos. 18 and 22 (and, possibly, No. 20 behind the plywood exterior) have large plate-glass store windows beneath transoms of fixed plate glass surrounded by small rectangular colored glass borders.

Small, modern, float-glass rectangular windows flank each side of the central first-floor doorway of the east elevation of No. 18. A similar, but larger, window is centered in the wall west of the primary doorway of No. 16.

The north and west elevations of No. 16 contain round-arched window openings with cast-iron hoods and sills. The windows on the first floor are set high on the wall and are shortened, lacking hoods. The first-floor windows have been blocked up and the second-floor windows have modern short aluminum sash with the upper portions of the openings infilled. The doorway at the west end of the north wall is flanked by two later window openings with segmental arches. The west windows lack the cast-iron trim.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: All four roofs are flat and covered with built-up roofing. The roof of No. 18 is almost entirely missing.
- b. Cornice, eaves: The original cast-iron molded cornice of the east elevation has been removed. The other two elevations never had either cornice or eaves.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The first floors of all four buildings are open rooms with small offices and restrooms typically located at the rear (west) end. The second floor of No. 16 is divided into four efficiency apartments and a storage room, all accessed from a central corridor located above the party wall between Nos. 16 and 18. The second floor of No. 18 was inaccessible because of heavy damage from a fire which destroyed both the roof and the floor. The second floors of Nos. 20 and 22 contain single apartments (now unoccupied and extremely deteriorated) accessed from a central corridor between them. The walls of No. 22 are of some interest as they are composed primarily of vertical board partitions which, in most rooms, do not run to the tall ceiling. Likewise, the apartment bathroom partitions of No. 16 are of similar construction. There is a basement beneath No. 16 containing a single room.
2. Stairways: There are three interior stairways. At the east end between Nos. 16 and 18 and between Nos. 20 and 22 straight-run stairs provide access to the second-floor corridors from the street. Near the west end of the south wall of the first floor of No. 16 is a steep, narrow, wooden, dogleg stair giving access to the basement beneath No. 16.
3. Flooring: Where it survives, the flooring throughout all four buildings is tongue-and-groove narrow pine boards. In some cases it is covered with linoleum.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: All walls and ceilings, where they survive, are plastered and painted.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Original interior doorways and doors survive in the second-floor apartments of Nos. 20 and 22. Those of No. 20 are typically four-panel doors with massive moldings. Those of No. 22 are four-panel doors and vertical plank doors of considerably lighter construction. Screen doors of later vintage were added along the corridors of both set of apartments. The corridor doorways of the second floor of No. 18 have been covered with plywood. The doors of the apartments of No. 16 are a twentieth-century variety of four-panel doors.
 - b. Windows: There is original interior window trim on the west windows of the first floors of Nos. 18 and 22. They are high-style Queen Anne Revival wood casings with incised ornament in addition to moldings. On the second floors of

Nos. 20 and 22 the interior rooms are lit by means of central skylights with frosted glazing.

6. Hardware: Surviving original door hardware on the second-floor doors of Nos. 20 and 22 consists of utilitarian cast-iron hinges and lockware.
7. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Heating: Nos. 18, 20, and 22 are unheated at present and do not retain any original heating devices (presumably stoves). Likewise No. 16 does not retain any original heating devices. The rear (west) apartment of the second floor of No. 16 retains a gas-fired space heater.
 - b. Lighting: No original lighting fixtures survive in any of the buildings and those that do survive are of recent vintage and of little or no interest. Knob-and-tube wiring is exposed on the underside of the ceiling of the second-floor apartment of No. 22.
 - c. Plumbing: No original plumbing fixtures or systems survive and there is some question whether the buildings originally had any plumbing. The fixtures that do survive on both floors of No. 16 and the second floor of No. 20 appear to date from the 1920s and are typical utilitarian fixtures of that period.

D. Site:

Befitting its urban site, the buildings face a secondary commercial street (Sixth Street) with a poured concrete sidewalk of modern vintage. To the north is an alley that retains wooden paving blocks beneath modern asphalt paving. To the west is a dead-end alley currently overgrown with weeds.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Early Views:

From Illustrated Fort Dodge:

Business Block and General Store of Mulroney Brothers, p. 134.
Interior View of Schaffer's Harness Shop, p. 133.

B. Interviews:

Steven Daniel, owner of Nos. 18 and 22 and grandson of Ferris Daniel, interviewed by Barbara Beving Long, July 31, 1992.

David Powell, owner of Shirl & Daves Tap, interviewed by Barbara Beving Long, July 31, 1992.

C. Bibliography:

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Note: Property owners of record, 1861 to the present, chain of ownership supplied by the City of Fort Dodge.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

Under contract to the City of Fort Dodge, David Arbogast, architectural conservator of Iowa City, Iowa, documented 16-22 S. Sixth St. at Historic American Buildings Survey Level 2 in July 1993. He was responsible for preparation of measured floor plans and the historian's report. Assisting him were Robert Ryan and Bruce Harms of the firm of Berger/Ryan of Iowa City who produced the photographic documentation of the buildings. Shortly after documentation the buildings were razed and replaced with a transit maintenance garage and office facility for the City of Fort Dodge.